

National Pain Awareness Month

Just about everyone has had a backache or neck ache from time to time. Except for chronic headaches, back pain is the most prevalent pain complaint. Statistics show that 50 to 80 percent of people will be disabled by back pain at some point during their lives. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), backaches are the second most common reason Americans go to the doctor (headaches are the first), and among the most common reasons for surgery.

The risk of back or neck injury is often related to your type of occupation or activity. Risk factors include:

- ⌚ Heavy manual labor
- ⌚ Vibration
- ⌚ Prolonged sitting or driving
- ⌚ Heavy lifting
- ⌚ Twisting
- ⌚ Bending
- ⌚ Pregnancy
- ⌚ Stress

Treatment Options

There are a number of treatment options for back and neck pain depending on the severity of the problem. For mild back and neck pain, rest and or pain-relieving medications may be used as treatment. For more persistent pain, physical therapy (heat, massage, ultrasound or electrical stimulation) may be an alternative. Surgery may even be considered for extreme pain.

Prevention

Eat well—Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables

Don't Smoke—Nicotine slows your body's healing process

Work Safe— Reduce the need for excessive bending, lifting, stooping



Adapted from The National Pain Foundation, Back and Neck Pain Overview

